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August 27, 1954

ASSESSMENT OF CONSEQUENCES OF EVENTUAL FRENCH
FAILURE TO RATIFY EDC TREATY

It is evident that the rejection by the French National Assembly of the EDC Treaty would constitute the greatest diplomatic triumph ever achieved by the USSR. In Russia, as well as in the iron curtain countries, and amongst the Communist parties of other nations, including the Soviet-controlled Communist delegation in the French National Assembly, the cardinal principle of Soviet policy has been, for some years, to prevent the coming into being of an European Defense Community which would include armed forces contributed by the German Federal Republic.

It would be foolish to pretend that the Soviet Government really fears the future addition of some twelve German divisions to the present military strength of the North Atlantic Treaty organization. The men of the Kremlin are more far-seeing. They realize that the EDC has become the symbol of the unity of the free world. By every means they have attempted to sow dissension amongst the Western powers. The death of the EDC Treaty at the hands of the French Parliament would result in a situation where the Russians would have everything to gain and nothing to lose. If they are patient, they can hope for the rift to deepen. At present, no true solidarity exists in the

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR

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REASON(S)

EXISTING MARKINGS ☐

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West because of the attitude of France. France is already isolated and
nds alone against its natural partners, irresolute as to its European
policy.

The fundamental problem confronting the French National Assembly is
not the rearmament of Germany, it is the future orientation of Germany,
whether separated into two parts or unified. Although Chancellor Adenauer
has consistently sought to identify the interests of the German Federal
Republic with those of his Western neighbors, the power of his opposition --
now dramatically on the increase -- is such as to make it improbable that
a final rebuff by France of his offers of cooperation and conciliation
will not, in spite of his efforts, place his country in the dangerous position,
as between West and East, of being able to orient its future toward the
highest bidder, and of being able to trouble the affairs and peace of
Europe by its uncertain political affiliations.

As to France itself, viewed in domestic political terms, it is probable
that a rejection of the EDC Treaty would reduce it to the rank of a second-
rate power and make it, at best, a super-Spain. It would be illusory to

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assert that, if France rejects the leadership of continental Europe, offered -- indeed pressed upon it by Adenauer and its other partners -- through the medium of its own inspired and imaginative concept of political, economic, and military integration of Western Europe, this leadership will again be proffered to it. If France now refuses such leadership, too many hopes and expectations will have been deceived for it later to recapture the enormous possibilities still available to it through ratification of the EDC Treaty.

It is painful to recall the humiliations to which the Soviet Union attempted to subject France in the aftermath of the last war. It was only upon American insistence, and over Soviet objections, that France became an occupying power in Germany. In fact, the French zone in Germany was accorded to it by the United States out of its own allotted territory. The position of France as one of the three great Western powers has already been gravely undermined by the lack of confidence in its policies and intentions publicly displayed by its associates.

Although it may be gratifying to French national pride to maintain that its Government's demands at Brussels were arbitrarily and unreasonably

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rejected by the unanimous opposition of the other five countries, no person familiar with the EDC Treaty text, so often amended in the past to take account of France's particular sensibilities, could fail to appreciate that the Mendès-France protocol would have emptied the treaty of its substance, and, even if accepted by the other Foreign Ministers, would have required resubmission in each instance to their respective Parliaments. Even if these Ministers had consented to such a procedure, no final action could have been anticipated before next year. Nor is there reason to believe that Parliaments conscious of their own dignity would have been responsive to arguments in many cases directly contrary to those upon which their previous approvals of the Treaty text had been based.

The French protocol was, as we understand it, frankly and cynically explained by Mendès-France as a device to attract votes in the French National Assembly. It is no longer useful to discuss its intrinsic merits, if indeed it possessed any; however, it is apparent that it did not represent any conciliation of the views of adherents or opponents of the Treaty, for before it was refused at Brussels it had been openly repudiated by

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many leaders of both factions in France. (The French Foreign Minister is said to have indicated, in dealing with the other Foreign Ministers, that such repudiations were meaningless, and that if the other five nations agreed to the French protocol, the EDC Treaty would be vetoed for by every "Cedist" regardless of his previously stated convictions on the subject.)

France is now confronted by the threat of isolation in international councils, of forfeiting its rank as a great nation, of having imperilled the sympathetic regard ^{of} ~~for~~ its partners for its delicate problems in North Africa, of losing the American military aid essential to the maintenance of its national army, since it has neither the financial resources nor the manufacturing facilities to support even its present military establishment.

It may be that the French Parliament will decide, in defiance of history, which has so frequently demonstrated the terrible danger of a German national army and a German general staff, to permit the revival of a Wehrmacht, uncontrolled by any true supranational authority such as that established, with the consent of the Germans themselves, under the provi-

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sions of the EDC and Bonn Treaties. That Western Germany will eventually be rearmed, no matter what juridical obstacles French parliamentarians believe their Government might interpose, is a certainty. Eastern Germany has already been rearmed by the Soviet Government, and has further weighted the balance of power against the Occident. Instead of a limited return of sovereignty to the German Federal Republic, as contemplated by the linking of the Paris and Bonn Treaties, the West may shortly be faced, if the Paris text is voted down, by an irresistible demand for the grant of unrestricted sovereignty to the German Federal Republic.

No practical or desirable alternative to the EDC Treaty has, after exhaustive examination, been presented. All such alternatives have necessarily been animated by one or the other of two principles. First, the constitution of an unrestricted German national army as part of a coalition. Second, the contribution of German military forces subject to discriminations such as would not be imposed upon the armies of other partners in the coalition. Bitter experiences have demonstrated the

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criminal folly of the first course; no self-respecting nation would accept the servitudes of the other course.

Moreover, if France displays itself incapable of sharing fully in the necessary obligations of an agreed allied European policy, it would be rash to assume the indefinite stationing of American and British ground forces on the European Continent. The British have announced they will withdraw their troops if the Americans do so. It is hoped the Americans will refrain from such action but, at the rate new weapons are developing, they may well decide to leave an uncooperative Europe to its fate, and retreat into their own continental fortress, where at least they would enjoy the melancholy consolation of being confident of resisting outside aggression for many years after the Europeans, in their unprotected position, had, if a powerful aggression occurred, been forced to yield to superior numbers and armaments.

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